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A HISTORIC MOMENT

(Mr. LANTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, moments before we opened this session, I had the privilege of witnessing a historic moment. Our distinguished Speaker, a lady who has just returned from a bipartisan visit to Kuwait, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan, met the distinguished Speaker, another lady, another statesman, another political leader of outstanding qualities, the Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament.

When these two women met, NANCY PELOSI and Katalin Szili, history was made. We saw two great democratic republics, with parliaments headed by outstanding women, exchange views and plan the future of stronger and even better relations between the Republic of Hungary and the United States of America.

I salute Speaker PELOSI and Speaker of Parliament Katalin Szili and wish both of them the very best.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, I think that there is a good part to the Democrat takeover of the House and the Senate, and that is that now the Democrats are at the table when we talk about Iraq. And there are many in this town who say failure is not an option. I think failure is an option. I think there would be disastrous consequences to that. The third largest oil-producing nation in the world would belong to terrorists. What would happen to the existing and fledgling Iraqi Government if you suddenly pulled our troops out of there? What kind of genocide would that bring? Those are things that have to be dealt with.

But I think that it is good that now we can have a bipartisan approach that the critics of the administration and the policy are now inside the room actually making policy. With that spirit, I think that it is time to tone down the rhetoric and work on a solution that will be best for Iraq, for America, and for the international community. And I say this with sincerity now because I think there is a good opportunity, and we only will have it, I think, for a few short months because the Presidential elections are kicking in, lots of rhetoric is floating around, but I think we can work together and come up with some good policy.

PRESIDENT'S HEALTH CARE PROPOSAL IS A BAD PLAN

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, in the President's State of the Union address last week, he made proposals for what is essentially a tax increase on more than 30 million Americans. That's right, if Congress were to pass the President's health care plan, more than 30 million Americans, many of whom are middle-class workers who have fought hard to negotiate comprehensive health care plans with their employers, would be taxed by the Federal Government. Good health insurance, for those lucky enough to have it, would be jeopardized as many Americans would be pushed into the individual insurance market where insurers can refuse coverage to workers based on their health.

That brings me to the least of these, those without insurance, a number which will grow under the President's plan. The Regional Medical Center at Memphis, the Med, a hospital that provides a disproportionate amount of service to the poor, could lose as much as \$30 million a year. Tennessee could see Federal revenue to support hospitals, nursing homes and other health providers by as much as \$300 million, and that would be an increase of taxes at the local level.

The Med plays a critical role in delivering health care to the poor. Losing the specialty services of the Med would leave serious gaps in our health care system that serves the entire region around Memphis, including Mississippi and Arkansas.

PRESIDENT'S TROOP ESCALATION PLAN IS NOT A PLAN FOR SUCCESS IN IRAQ

(Mr. BUTTERFIELD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, just how many people need to tell the President that his troop escalation plan is a terrible idea before he actually begins to listen? The American people sent the President a strong message last November that they no longer want our troops involved in what has become a civil war in Iraq.

The President's own generals have told him that they didn't need more troops in Iraq; but rather than listening to his generals, as he has always suggested that he has done, he has now turned around and replaced them with generals who are more friendly to the idea of sending more troops.

The bipartisan Iraq Study Group told the President that more troops were not needed. Instead, they concluded that a strategic redeployment should be initiated in the coming months and that the administration should reach out to the neighbors in the region, ideas the administration has rejected.

If this were not enough, an overwhelming number of Democrats, and Republicans I might say, here on Capitol Hill have expressed opposition to the plan.

Madam Speaker, how many people have to tell him "no" before he listens?

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SUPPORT OUR TROOPS BUT OPPOSE THE WAR IN IRAQ

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of our troops, and I want to underscore that. But I also want to make clear that I am opposed to the war in Iraq. Our service men and women are proudly serving our country. More than 3,063 of our sons and daughters, including 13 from the 32nd Congressional District that I represent, have given their lives.

This war, as you know, has cost taxpayers \$387 billion so far, and an additional \$100 billion to \$130 billion is going to be requested by this President. There is no plan to secure the peace. There is no accountability for companies like Halliburton that have been found to make more than \$1.4 billion in unreasonable and unsupported billing charges, and our veterans lack the support needed and deserved.

We need a plan that ensures that there are no permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq, and not a plan to increase the buildup. We need a plan which investigates and punishes companies engaged in war profiteering and fraud and a plan to redeploy our servicemen and women. We need to find a political solution.

AMERICANS OPPOSE TROOP ESCALATION IN IRAQ

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, President Bush's dangerous plan to escalate the war in Iraq will not make Americans more secure. In fact, it will only lead to more bloodshed and violence. The plan faces significant bipartisan opposition in both Chambers of Congress and is opposed by a vast majority of people in this country.

Some Republicans are belatedly calling for benchmarks to measure progress in Iraq, even as they stand by the President's plan to escalate the war. Democrats were calling for benchmarks for success in Iraq years ago, but our pleas fell on deaf ears.

As an early and staunch opponent to this war, I have watched as every single prediction this administration has made has been proven wrong, from the duration of the war, the reception we would receive, the costs, the number of casualties and the existence of weapons of mass destruction, all wrong.

The loss of more young men and women is too high a price to pay for